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ICTERUS FUERTESI CHAPMAN
ADULT MALE AND FEMALE
(Two-thirds natural size)

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DESCRIPTION OF A NEW ORIOLE (*ICTERUS FUERTESI*) FROM MEXICO.

BY FRANK M. CHAPMAN.

Plate I.

AMONG the birds collected by Louis Agassiz Fuertes and the writer in Mexico, between February 23 and April 21, 1910, are four specimens of an apparently undescribed oriole which, while most nearly related to *Icterus spurius*, appears to be specifically distinct from that bird. For this new bird I propose the name *Icterus fuertesi*, in honor of Louis Agassiz Fuertes, not alone in recognition of his invaluable services to ornithology, but also because, attracted by its notes, he was the actual discoverer of the species to which his name is now given.

This interesting species was found on the south bank of the Tamesi River, Mexico, some 75 miles by river and 35 miles in an air-line from Tampico, where from April 1-9, we were the guests of Mr. Thomas H. Silsbee on the sugar plantation Paso del Haba. The Tamesi River at this point is 100 yards wide. Its banks are high and, except where cleared, support narrow strips of heavy forest which, a short distance inland, is flanked by the lower, more scrubby growth characteristic of the region.

The orioles in question inhabited the dense bushy growth which has sprung up on the river banks from which the forest has been cut. They were all taken in a space not more than two hundred

yards long and, in addition to the four specimens secured, at least one more adult male was seen.

Whether the birds also occurred in favorable areas beyond the heavy forest I am unable to say, since the surprising abundance of bird-life near the river claimed all our time and attention.

In the same bit of second growth from which the four specimens of *Icterus fuertesi* were taken I collected a perfectly typical adult male *Icterus spurius*, a circumstance which suggests the possibility of the two male specimens of the proposed new bird being aberrant examples of that species. Opposed to this theory, however, are the following facts: (1) The two adult males secured are essentially alike, the third, which was well seen, was of the same buffy color, while examination of very large series of adult *Icterus spurius* reveals no specimen approaching those representing the proposed new species. (2) The four specimens of *Icterus fuertesi* are all smaller than any specimens of *Icterus spurius* which I have examined, as the appended table of southern breeding birds shows, while the Tamesi specimen of *Icterus spurius* (as well as an adult male taken by Mr. Fuertes in the Tamiahua Lagoon, April 17, 1910) agrees in size with specimens of *Icterus spurius* from Texas. (3) The four specimens of *Icterus fuertesi* had the sexual organs much enlarged and were evidently about to breed, while in the specimens of *Icterus spurius* the sexual organs were but slightly increased in size. In short, it is believed that the specimen of *Icterus spurius*, taken with *Icterus fuertesi* on April 5, was a northbound migrant, a belief supported by observations made in the spring of 1891 at Corpus Christi, Texas, where *Icterus spurius* was first noted as arriving from the south on April 5.

It may be added that the song of *Icterus fuertesi*, while unmistakably of the Orchard Oriole type, differs materially from the song of that species. It is less rich and loud, and lacks a certain distinctness of articulation and finish which characterize the song of *Icterus spurius*.

The type of *Icterus affinis* Lawr. (Am. Mus. No. 41954) has the chestnut-colored areas of rather exceptional richness and depth. It was taken at Brownsville, Texas, by J. P. McCown, evidently in the spring, although the label lacks date. Its small size, however, would indicate that it was a breeding bird, and we have

Merrill's statement (Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., 1878, p. 135) to the effect that this species nests "rather plentifully" at that point. In view of the fact that breeding specimens from southern Texas and from Mexico in the American Museum collection (see table beyond) while smaller, as might be expected, show no appreciable difference in color from specimens of *Icterus spurius* at the northern limit of its range, it is not a little surprising that within a distance of 250 miles, and with no very striking change in environment, a difference as great as that exhibited by *Icterus fuertesi* should be shown. While the new bird, therefore, appears unquestionably to be a representative of *Icterus spurius*, it probably does not intergrade with that form, and I have no hesitation in describing it as a distinct species.

Icterus fuertesi sp. nov.

FUERTE'S ORIOLE.

Chars. Sp.—Most nearly related to *Icterus spurius*, but smaller with the chestnut areas of that species replaced by a color which varies from buff to ochraceous. Type, Coll. Am. Mus. Nat. Hist., 95909; Paso del Haba, south shore of Tamesi River, 35 miles northwest of Tampico, Mexico, April 6, 1910; collected and presented by Louis Agassiz Fuertes.

Description of Adult Male (type).—Head, throat, center of chest, fore-back and scapulars black, the two latter slightly edged with grayish brown; rest of body, including upper and under tail-coverts, rich buff with a slight yellowish cast, particularly medianly on the underparts (the color here is much like the buffy tips to the fall plumage of adult males of *Icterus spurius*), and with a cinnamon shade on the rump; wings black, edged externally with whitish, lesser, median, and under wing-coverts cinnamon-buff, greater wing-coverts black, bordered terminally with white; tail black, the outer feathers graduated and narrowly tipped with whitish. Wing, 71; tail, 64; exposed culmen, 15 mm.

Adult Female.—Similar in color to the corresponding plumage of *Icterus spurius* but size smaller. Wing, 68; tail, 63.5; exposed culmen, 14.5 mm. (No. 95908, Tamesi River, Mexico, April 7, 1910, F. M. C.)

Immature Male.—Similar in color to corresponding plumage of *Icterus spurius*, but smaller. Wing, 72; tail, 65.5; exposed culmen, 15 mm. (No. 95907, Tamesi River, April 7, 1910, F. M. C.)

TABLES OF MEASUREMENTS.

Icterus fuertesi.

Coll.	Sex.	Date and Place.	Wing.	Tail.	Ex. Culmen.
			mm.	mm.	mm.
Am. Mus. 95909 (type)	♂ ad.	Tamesi River, Mex. Apr. 6	71	64	15
L. A. F. 2201	♂ ad.	" " Apr. 6	72.5	66.5	16
Am. Mus. 95907	♂ im.	" " Apr. 7	72	65.5	15.
Am. Mus. 95908	♀ ad.	" " Apr. 7	68	63.5	14.5

Icterus spurius.

Coll.	Sex.	Date and Place.	Wing.	Tail.	Ex. Culmen.
			mm.	mm.	mm.
Am. Mus., aver. 5 ads.	♂ ad.	Vicinity New York City, May	81.5	74.5	16.5
" " 82901	♂ ad.	Hidalgo, Tex., May 24	78.	68.	—
" " 82885	♂ ad.	Rio Grande City, June 23	74.5	68.	16.
" " 82891	♂ ad.	Lomita, Tex., July 12	79.5	70.	16.5
" " 82890	♂ ad.	" " July 12	79.	70.	16.
" " 87944	♂ ad.	Escuinapa, Sinaloa, Mex. July 29	77.	68.	—
" " 87943	♂ ad.	Rosario, Sinaloa, Mex., July 22	77.	70.	15.
" " 95906	♂ ad.	Tamesi River, Mex., April 6	77.	71.	15.5
" " 75322	♀ ad.	Hastings, N. Y., May 15	75.	65.5	15.5
" " 82892	♀ ad.	Lomita, Tex., July 4	69.	64.5	15.